

earlier. Gougeon documents the numerous antislavery lectures Emerson delivered during the 1840s and 1850s.

Yet in 1855 Emerson still insisted on seeing slavery as one aspect of a larger problem, skepticism about human virtue. A diminished faith in human possibilities and a higher law lead to the acceptance of the certainty of things, to the materialism that accepts slavery. But historical events have damaged Emerson's optimism about fate. And his belief in a moral elite as a source of persuasion and moral conversion has been undermined by the criticisms of abolition advanced by cultured individuals such as Holmes and Webster. Now, social problems can be solved in two ways: the inefficient man-way of voluntary co-operation, legislation, and compromise; or the unexpected events or natural causes of the preferable god-way. In the mid 1850s Emerson is stressing the importance of voting and not compromising with slavers. However, by the late 1850s fate is no longer a beautiful necessity, but something to be opposed and directed by human will and duty, Emerson is contributing to the purchase of rifles for antislavery Kansas farmers, and depicting John Brown as a misguided hero. Fate provokes human power to aspire to moral reform and redirection. And fate acts to undermine slavery through unexpected events such as the civil war.

This is the portrait Gougeon paints of Emerson the social activist. It is not fully convincing. The Emerson who emerges is concerned to remove slavery so that America could fulfill its moral role as the highest developed human society and redeem itself for its policies towards Indians. Emerson may have realized that culture without a social program is not enough to guarantee social justice, yet his concern is still with the historical culture and not with individual freedom. Perhaps this demonstrates his lingering doubts about racial equality.

Finally, there is Gougeon's interpretation of Emerson's remark that he would write on the lintels of the doorpost, Whim. This indicates Emerson's willingness to act on impulse and accept whatever ruination may result from this gesture. So interpreted, the remark is consistent with the portrait of Emerson as a social activist. But Whim is written in the place of religious identification, and so suggests a person who views individual realization as more significant than social causes.

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POLITICS, SENSE, EXPERIENCE: A PRAGMATIC INQUIRY INTO THE PROMISE OF DEMOCRACY, by Timothy V. Kaufman-Osborn, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991, cloth, \$21.95.

The title of Kaufman-Osborn's book suggests that there was a problem getting a clear focus for the many parts of the book. It

is a very learned book, Deweyan in one way (and not in others), and it covers a great deal of ground, historically and topically. In one sense, it is a 'genealogical' essay on 'teleocratic reason;' in another, an argument that western philosophy is an enemy of democracy; in another that there is a kind of politics which comes from getting clear that fundamental to our present condition is 'an anesthetization of experience.'

To begin his last chapter, Kaufman-Osborn asks: 'If the most powerful structures of modernity mandate modes of behavior consistent with established notions of reason, and if that requirement systematically undermines experience's meaningfulness, then how might we begin to fashion that dynamic's reversal?' (p. 260) Kaufman-Osborn assumes the truth of the first conditional. Much of the book, then, aims to show that what he calls 'teleocratic reason' does 'undermine experience's meaningfulness.' 'Teleocratic reason,' it turns out, includes what Weber called 'rationalization.' Weber's analysis of modernity (enriched by Foucault) both sets the stage for the account and is the backdrop of the critique of the liberal state in the concluding chapter. But more widely (and vaguely), 'teleocratic reason' is 'merely a shorthand way of pointing to a thread of continuity that, to use an equally problematic reification, marks off what is conventionally called the "Western philosophical tradition"' (p. 112).

Kaufman-Osborn puts to critical use Dewey's views on mind, sentience, experience and conduct--doctrines which many astute scholars (e.g. Elizabeth Flower and James Tiles) have centered. This is the case especially in his highly pertinent criticisms of Habermas. Moreover, in some ways the book is a development of Dewey's views on the philosophical legacy of Plato and Aristotle. Along then with the excellent chapter on Habermas, I found the first three chapters to be highly instructive and valuable, even if (here betraying my own methodological prejudice) it is disjoined from, if you will, 'on-the-ground' history. Only with the polis, following Dewey closely, is there much attention to institutional affairs and practices). later chapters, one on Durkheim and the other on American policy science from Merriam to Lasswell to Wildavsky, are not well integrated.

Durkheim's role in Kaufman-Osborn's 'tale' is not entirely clear. Kaufman-Osborn seems to want to use Durkheim to show that 'the impasse into which [he] was led exemplifies the difficulties liberalism encounters as a result of its attachment to epistemology's representation of cognition as the establishment of a relationship of correspondence between subjective consciousness and objective reality' (p. 133). Not only does this put considerable causal weight on the role of philosophical ideas, but as part of this move, Kaufman-Osborn hints at a highly telescoped argument with an important conclusion. Presumably 'liberals' believe that 'a plurality of individuals will already require some bond of unity before they can even begin to rule'

Further, such unity requires 'submitting to a world of objective facts' (p. 134)--where, presumably, 'objective facts' is understood as by Durkheim.

Although it does not emerge clearly, this last idea seems to be the link to the account of American policy science. Kaufman-Osborn quotes Harold Lassell:

The hope of the professors of social science, if not of the world, lies in the competitive strength of an elite based on vocabulary, footnotes, questionnaires, and conditioned responses against an elite based on vocabulary, poison gas, and family prestige (p. 220).

Kaufman-Osborn insists, rightly, that these anti-democratic policy scientists can lay no claim to 'the legacy of pragmatism.'

So far so good. But the outcome was, for me disappointing, perhaps because I was simply unable finally to get a clear handle on his version of Dewey. The last two sections of chapter 7, 'Democratic Political Experience' seem to me to get Dewey's views on conduct and democracy exactly right. The 'philosophers' misconceive experience (and mind and conduct); they fail to see that experience is practical, a matter of doings and sufferings. Further, they fail to see that while mind is social, it is constituted by agents transacting practically and that 'simply in virtue of its participation in constitutional relations, ordinary experience bears a political quality, albeit one that exists for the most part as an unrealized potentiality' (p. 306). For Dewey, of course, the problem was how to realize this, how to create 'publics.'

When Kaufman-Osborn gives his response to this profound problem, he lapses into a forbidding prose style and worse, he suggests that he has lost sight of the analysis to which he had seemed committed. For example, rejecting the 'communitarian's effort to reconstitute at the translocal level the bounds appropriate to more immediate forms of sustained engagement,' he writes:

They must learn to locate and repossess the domain of things that come into being only because the dissimilarities between them, relating and separating them at one and the same moment, establish the possibility of specifically political issues.

If such translocal things are to be 'had' commonly, the meanings that bear their significance must possess not the property of clear and distinct visibility, but rather than of tangibility, the capacity to be re-fashioned by those engaged in making sense (p. 151).

He gives no examples or analysis of what these 'things' ('pragmata') are. Nor is there a hint as to what must happen or what we must do if we are to 'learn' to do this? Second, isn't the case

that, on Dewey's view, all 'meanings' are 'tangible.' Finally, Kaufman-Osborn hints that meanings can be 'refashioned' independently of altering the conditions which forbid our 'having' them? Or,

. . . . Meanings pointing toward less immediate sources of everyday experience's qualitative dimensions can prove intelligible only when they enter associational forms possessing sufficient resilience to withstand the dynamics of political economy otherwise bent on systematically effacing the parochial sources of coherence (p. 150).

Are there in contemporary society 'meanings' which are not 'intelligible' but would be with more democratic forms of association? And again, are these forms realizable without altering the dynamics of political economy?

Accordingly, it is at least misleading to say that 'we can escape the manufactured state of bureaucratic nihilism only by acknowledging that the ontological conditions of meaningful experience are correlative with those necessary to sustain democratic politics' (p. 260). First, as he seems to acknowledge, it is just us who, in using materials at hand 'manufactured' this state. It is just us who, in our activity, reproduce it. Elsewhere, after referring to the 'anesthetization of ordinary experience which obviates the call to think,' he offers that actors 'accept its currently dessicated form as normal, and so forget how to know themselves as agencies of transformative conduct' (p. 286). There were some episodes--1776, 1789, 1848, 1870, 1917--when, presumably, they did not 'forget'--suggesting that 'forgetting' is not the right word, that indeed, something is wanting in the analysis.

Second, Dewey did identify the 'ontological conditions of meaningful experience.' But exactly because these are ontological conditions, they are not 'correlative with those necessary to sustain democratic politics, even while they give us leverage on what kinds of institutional arrangements might be necessary for experiences which were not dessicated, impoverished, etc. Kaufman-Osborn obscures critical issues by equivocating as regards the idea of 'meaningful experience.' It is precisely the 'meaningful experiences' of most Americans which is the challenge.

Consistent, then, with Kaufman-Osborn's reading of Dewey as a metaphysician of experience, I am also troubled by his sketch of pragmatic politics and its 'cash-value.' He insists that his politics is radical in the sense that it envisages 'a rough equilibrium of effective power.' In terms of strategy, he is probably correct to reject as poles, reform and revolution. He rightly rejects the 'call for a grand insurrection' undertaken by those with the ability 'to engage in principled revolt.' His reasons for this, however, are less convincing. He argues that

`revolution' presupposes a `universally shared, theoretically articulable, and systematic knowledge of the present crisis's root causes' (p. 318). His objection is not that such a analysis and vision is unlikely to be widely shared--for the sorts of reasons which Dewey produced in many places. Rather, he says, `to advance this latter claim is to fall prey to the epistemological illusion that commonality presupposes identity of cognitive vision, that is, uniform apprehension of self-identical representations' (p. 319). Perhaps Kaufman-Osborn suffers here from epistemological loss of nerve and thinks, finally, that in no useful sense are there `objective facts'? Indeed, despite the sensible if brief account of a reconstituted political science, knowledge plays but a marginal role in his account of transformative politics.

Nor is he clear about such a politics. He argues that the call to principled revolt also presupposes `a distinction between real revolutionary practices and action that, by way of comparison, is `insignificant' because it is unorganized, oriented to the `trivial' needs of the current incident and uninformed by a determinate grasp of the goals it seeks to secure' (*ibid.*) It is quite one thing to say that the ordinary is the locus of all transformative practice, of all politics, but quite another to celebrate directionless, isolated responses to discontent which lack a coherent diagnoses. Indeed, unlike Dewey (but nearer to Rorty for whose politics Kaufman-Osborn nevertheless shows (pp. 16ff.) no explicit sympathy), Kaufman-Osborn ends with James's asocial, apolitical (or if political, reactionary!) essay, `What Makes a Life Significant?'

Readers will remember that in this essay James berates Walter Wyckoff's account of the despair and desperation of the lives of unskilled laborers. Since the `current of their souls ran underground,' and Wyckoff was `too steeped in ancestral blindness,' he failed to see that there might well have been some `morally exceptional individuals' among these men. James asserts (stunningly): `society has, with all this, undoubtedly got to pass toward some newer and better equilibrium, and the distribution of wealth has doubtless slowly got to change.' Kaufman-Osborn quotes, approvingly, the text which follows:

But if, after all that I have said any of you expect that they will make any genuine vital difference on a large scale, to the lives of our descendants, you will have missed the significance of my entire lecture. The solid meaning of life is always the same eternal thing--the marriage, namely of some unhabitual ideal, however special, with some fidelity, courage and endurance; with some man's or women's pains (p. 319).

Heaven help us from those who do make `genuine, vital differences on a large scale,' who did not `forget' their transformative powers. I am, accordingly, skeptical of a politics which asks us

`to discover what is withdrawn from the realm of potentiality by sedimentary ways of eliciting experiential form from an intrinsically ambiguous nature' (p. 290) and which calls for `an unending stream of agile undertakings aimed at overcoming the numbness that now blocks our feeling for the concrete, the particular and the parochial' (p. 318).

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TIME, FREEDOM AND THE COMMON GOOD: AN ESSEY IN PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY, by Charles M. Sherover. State University of New York Press, Albany, 1989, 314 pp, \$19.95 Paper back.

This is a book of immense importance, not only because of the scholarship of the writer but also because it has taken up very important issues of our time. Prof. Sherover in this book has definitely proved his mastery over history of philosophy and over pragmatic method. The aim of this book is to find out the `central guiding principles' of our time and to seek their roots in history. For Prof. Sherover, `temporality', `freedom', and `common good' constitutes the `core of the social fabric'. Therefore understanding them in their interrelation is important to bring about the necessary reforms to develop our future with confidence.

This book has been divided into three sections. The first part discusses `The three principles of polity'. and 'freedom'. The second part is titled `Dynamic of a free polity' which is described in three chapters on citizenship', `governance', and `livelihood'. Prof. Sherover thinks these three principles are important for developing a free society. The third part is the `Discipline of freedom', which is again divided into three chapters, namely `history', `agenda' and `pragmatics'.

Freedom is the most pervasive theme of this book. **Freedom'** for Prof. Sherover, is the most essential quality of man. This is the trait that makes him `human'. Man is free to the extent in which he can act autonomously. "Freedom is the ground out of which our social individualities and our individual temporalities emerge as a multitude of unique contribution to the common good". (p. 88) For him our `sociality' emerges prior to our `individualities'. "Before I can develop any notion of self-identity I develop a notion of common sociality of belonging together with others". (p. 23) Therefore, to contribute towards the common good is our social responsibility. There is a need for `moderation'. Freedom, if not moderated, may become `licence' and `tyranny'. Prof. Sherover has described time and history as very important factors. All our life experiences, according to Prof. Sherover, are `encounters with time'. For him, the time, as we experience, is `not the steady beat of pendulum.' He has distinguished quite aptly the `experiential time' from the `objective